DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 306 403 CE 052 366

TITLE	Access to the Mainstream Curriculum. A Report on the Integration of Learners with Special Needs at Canterbury College of Technology.
INSTITUTION	Further Education Unit, London (England).
REPORT NO	ISBN-1-85338-093-8
PUB DATE	88
NOTE	67p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Accessibility (for Disabled); *Access to Education; Agency Cooperation; Ancillary School Services; *Disabilities; Foreign Countries; *Mainstreaming; Parent Participation; Parent School Relationship; Postsecondary Education; *Special Education; Staff Development; *Technical Institutes; Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	*Canterbury College of Technology (England)

ABSTRACT

This report is a summary of work carried out at Canterbury College of Technology (England) during 1986 to manage access to the mainstream curriculum for a group of students with physical and sensory disabilities. It emphasizes the case study approach because it was from that indepth analysis that the college was able to develop strategies. The three phases of the project are discussed: Phase I, which examined the existing situation and tried to identify individual students wanting to gain access to the mainstream college provision; Phase II, which consisted of a detailed analysis of the needs of students identified; and Phase III, which continued development of Phase II and identified the changes required in the curriculum to accommodate fully students being brought into mainstream college life. Other chapters describe the staff development program to support the integration process, the role of managers in special needs education in a further education establishment, significant support services, and cooperation with schools and outside agencies. The involvement of parents in further education and the role of the local educational agency are also examined. A 13-item bibliography is followed by these appendixes: a summary of the special needs work undertaken at the college and the college's Policy Statement on Special Educational Needs Provision. (YLB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED306403

ACCESS TO THE MAINSTREAM CURRICULUM

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

P Dugdale

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

FURTHER EDUCATION UNIT

CE052 366

ACCESS TO THE MAINSTREAM CURRICULUM

A report on the integration of learners with special needs at Canterbury College of Technology.

ISBN 1 85338 093 8

© Further Education Unit (FEU) 1988
Reproduction in whole or in part of the contents of this publication is authorised for all non-commercial educational purposes, provided the source is acknowledged.
All rights reserved with regard to commercial reproduction of the contents.

Printed by J. E. C. Potter. Stamford

Contents

		Page
	Foreword	iv
	Preface	v
	Project Staff and Steering Committee	vi
1.	Introduction	1
2.	The project structure	7
3.	Phase 1: Understanding the existing situation	8
4.	Phase II: A needs analysis from case studies	12
5.	Phase III: The students in college	28
6.	Staffing and staff development	39
7.	The role of managers	44
8.	Support services	46
9.	Co-operation with schools and outside agencies	47
10.	Parents and college	49
11.	The role of the LEA	51
12.	Conclusion	52
	Bibliography	54
Appendices		
1.	Summary of special needs work	55
2.	Policy statement	57

Foreword

There is a growing FE commitment to supporting the right of students with special needs to enjoy the full range of curricular experiences. This report, from Canterbury College of Technology, offers one college's experience of managing access to the mainstream curriculum for a group of students with physical and sensory disabilities. The college decided that physical access was only a small part of the challenge. The report offers recognisable examples of the often larger challenges facing a college as it seeks to test its special needs policy and discovers the kinds of flexibility, co-operation and co-ordination needed to support the real process of integration.

The college took the needs of the individual students as cental to its work but found that these needs are only met satisfactorily within a whole college policy and with the active commitment of senior managers. The LEA too played its part in providing a supportive context for the project. The students speak for themselves in Chapter 5.

Special needs work at Canterbury College is a cross-college and, so, cross-curricular initiative. The essential procedures and structures to support and focus this way of working are described in the report.

The college saw careful analysis of curriculum and support need as central to successful integration. The case studies described in Chapter 4 show this skilled work in progress. The Special Needs Co-ordinator's role in offering advice, support and practical help to students and colleagues and in co-ordinating the contributions of other professionals is vital, but so is the goodwill, additional preparation and extra pastoral support offered by non-teaching staff as they carry, usually willingly, the 'hidden support' costs.

The staff development programme to support the integration work is described in Chapter 6. This recognised the new demands being made upon both specialist and non-specialist staff and helped to extend existing skills.

FEU welcomes comments on this report and is interested in receiving proposals that address the issues surrounding integration, in particular where the progression of students with learning difficulties is involved. Please contact Pat Hood, FEU Development Officer for Special Needs.

DENNIS DRYSDALE
Deputy Chief Officer
Further Education Unit

Preface

This report is a summary of work carried out at Canterbury College of Technology during 1986. The college has been attempting to develop a special needs provision within an ordinary college of further education. The emphasis of the work has been to enable young people with physical and sensory handicaps to join ordinary mainstream college courses. Their entry into college has been achieved by looking at their individual needs and seeing what changes in the curriculum would enable their chosen course to meet those needs.

Special thanks are due to the Further Education Unit for providing the funding that made the project possible. The support and advice of Merillie Huxley, FEU development officer, was very much appreciated by the project staff. Much is owed to Anne Hancox, the project research assistant, who provided so much help. Thanks must go to the students who kindly agreed to be the subjects of this report; without them this report would have had no substance. The interest of the college Principal, Francis Howitt, in the development of provision for special educational needs has assisted much of the work forward in the right atmosphere. The encouragement of the steering committee throughout the life of the project and since has been appreciated by the project staff. Finally, the manuscript with all its revisions owes much to Fiona Brookeman, patiently putting up with the changes.

Project Staff

Project Director	Terry Price	Vice-Principal, Canterbury College of Technology
Project Leader	Ed Manser	Special Needs Co-ordinator, Canterbury College of Technology
Project Assistant	Anne Hancox	
FEU Project Officer	Merillie Huxley	

Steering Committee

Neil Morrison	Canterbury Christ Church College of Higher Education
Peter Abbotts	Canterbury Christ Church College of Higher Education
Brian Shelley	Headteacher, Orchard Special School
Graham Gorvette	Special Careers Officer
Gordon Browne	Strode Park Foundation
Terry Price	Project Director
Ed Manser	Project Leader

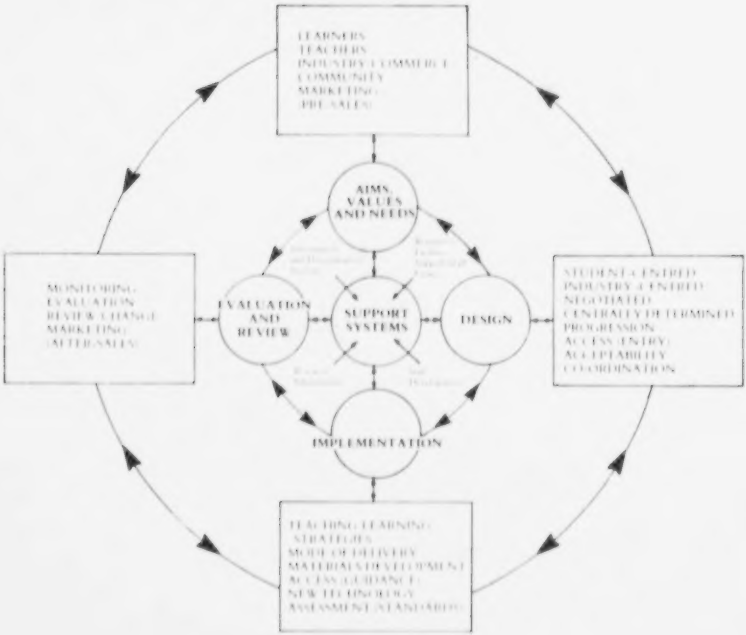
1. Introduction

The project

For some time, Canterbury College of Technology has been concerned to improve access to the college for those with disabilities. A project was proposed to examine ways of enhancing the possibility of entry by students with learning difficulties arising from physical and sensory handicaps into mainstream courses through modification of the curriculum. The development of the curriculum for such students was seen to be central to improving access. Only by bringing the needs of the students to bear on the existing curriculum and thereby requiring it to change would there be the opportunity for the students to enter and succeed on a particular college course. Changing the curriculum in response to the needs of the students requires a reversal of the traditional further education approach. Much of further education has provided courses with a very fixed approach to curriculum, usually dominated by the requirements of examining boards. Recent developments have produced a climate of change in which the whole process of curriculum development based on individual need is much more possible.

The FEU model of the curriculum (Figure 1, page 2) became a framework for the design of the project because it best represented the concept of the curriculum already held by those concerned with change within Canterbury College. The framework the FEU model provides enabled an early identification of elements in the curriculum that would require attention.

The climate of change has already been extended to the way in which we view handicap. The provision of education for those with special educational needs has in the past been dominated by the actual handicap. There is now a shift in emphasis. The medical model, dominated by its concern with the physical condition, describing in medical terms losses of function which were handicapping for all time, is now replaced by a concept of the individual who, having a particular loss of function, may or may not be handicapped by it. John Fish, in his book *Special Education: The Way Ahead*, notes that the distinction between disability and handicap is crucial to the understanding of individual special educational needs and to the development of arrangements to meet them. It recognises that the handicapping effects of a disability may change over time from childhood to adulthood and as a result of different forms of intervention. Finally, it includes the idea that the handicapping effects in employment, living and leisure circumstances can be understood while the importance of elements in those situations which are amenable to change can be identified (page 8, paragraph 3). The needs of the individual now predominate. This change in emphasis provides a starting-point for changing and developing the curriculum to meet those needs.



INNER CIRCLE AND HUB-
The curriculum development cycle

OUTER CIRCLE-
Features of each stage in the cycle

Figure 1: Process of Curriculum Development

Staff at the college generally accepted the principle of equality of opportunity in further education for all students, irrespective of need. The full range of choices was considered as within the rights of those with special educational needs, as was integration within the college's ordinary provision. New teaching facilities designed for maximum access had been added to the college.

In spite of these changes, there was little evidence that people with disabilities were applying for courses, or being accepted. It was suspected that the majority

of young people with physical and sensory disabilities remained within 16+ units of special schools or entered specialised further education colleges (e.g. Hereward College in Coventry). Such special further education provision has concentrated some of the very best resources for special needs and has often been the only way for many students to obtain further education and training. It seemed that special needs students were not aware of the opportunities provided by their local college. The factors influencing choices being made by these students were not known. There was no indication if any choice had been offered to them or whether they had simply been given a course to follow.

Early in the project *A College Guide: Meeting Special Educational Needs* (Longman for FEU, 1986) was published. Some of the developments already undertaken by Canterbury College corresponded very closely with recommendations made in that guide; others differed because of local circumstances. This guide is to be recommended to any college undertaking the development of a special needs programme. Colleges with already well-established work might use it as a tool for reviewing their programmes for this group of students and for staff development.

The college environment

Since 1978, the college had been involved in providing link courses for students with moderate learning difficulties. These had been provided on direct request from local special schools which had no provision for post-16 students and saw the link course as a means of helping post-16 transition. Between 1982 and 1984 the link provision was discontinued because of cut-backs in resources, but it was re-established in 1985. Since then there have been two groups of 15 students. One of the groups is integrated into the link provision arranged for other secondary school pupils. The second group is a discrete group working through a series of taster experiences in a number of college departments. The response from participating school pupils has been good. An outcome of the establishment of this kind of provision is post-16 link courses for groups of profoundly hearing-impaired students from a local special school for the deaf. These group team school staff with college staff, in practical classes, to overcome the communications problems, with college staff undertaking orientation and training in the school. The presence of these young people in the college has already increased the awareness of staff to those with special educational needs; this is shown through positive comments and interest in being involved in working with these students. These link course developments were taking place at the same time as the college was running a highly successful YTS-sponsored Work Introduction Programme. This programme is now a full-time two-year YTS programme and provided the springboard for the development of a one-year extended education course.

The completion in 1982 of a major extension to the college was significant. This block, consisting of facilities for Childcare, Business and Office Practice, Catering, and Community Care courses, has access on all levels for wheelchairs and full toilet facilities on three of the four floors. The new building is linked to the main building by a bridge, enabling access to a limited part of the latter. The existence of this building made an important contribution to the accessibility of the college premises to those with physical handicaps.

Following the commissioning of this building it was apparent that, for a modest sum, a significant additional part of the college could be accessible for those with physical handicaps. Around £12,000 was spent on the building of ramps, showers and toilet facilities. As a result of this work, which was completed in 1985/86, 45% of the college is accessible to those with mobility problems.

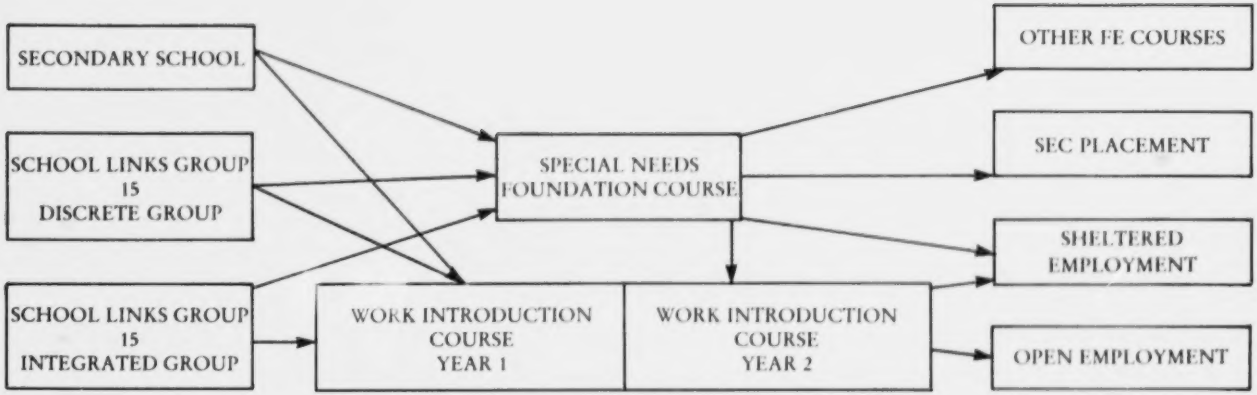
Senior management was aware that improving physical access was just one aspect of meeting the demands of those with special educational needs. To ensure access, attention had to be paid to the curriculum, and it was only by carrying out a needs analysis that the extent of the change required could be determined. The FEU, therefore, was approached for funds for an investigation of needs and the development of appropriate strategies to meet them.

The college made available a temporary post at Lecturer 2 level. This was one of several open to bids from all college departments for promoted posts to co-ordinate specific areas, i.e. TVEI, CPVE, YTS and Special Educational Needs.

The Department of Adult Education submitted a bid for the special educational needs co-ordinator. There was a simultaneous submission to the Academic Board from the Central Resources Department of the college, by the vice-principal, for a similar appointment. The Adult Education Department submitted a comprehensive job description. Following competitive interviews, a Special Needs Co-ordinator was appointed from the Department of Adult Education staff. This appointment was crucial to the further development of a college-wide special needs programme because it took special needs outside a particular department.

A Special Educational Needs Policy Statement was drawn up by the college Co-ordinator (see Appendix 2). The statement was based on recommendations made by the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education in co-operation with the National Bureau for Handicapped Students. The document was well received by the Academic Board which approved it in its entirety. The statement had a number of implications:

— The admissions procedure would have to be modified.



Special needs foundation course – Course designed to take account of the individual needs of students with special needs.

Figure 2: Lines of progression for students with special needs

— Further increases in physical access were needed.

— There would have to be more flexibility in curriculum design to accommodate students with special needs.

— A staff development programme was required to prepare staff for any resulting increase in the numbers and variety of students with special needs.

The statement was circulated to schools, colleges and careers offices throughout the county and began to generate interested enquiries.

As a result of discussions with college staff and LEA officials, an integrated scheme of further education for those with moderate learning difficulties was drawn up (Figure 2, page 5). A significant part of this scheme was that there should be definite lines of progression for students, with flexibility to enter at any point according to individual need. Flexibility in the curriculum was considered to be of great importance and the scheme included the proposed development of a new extended education course. The outcome of these proposals, which corresponded with the objectives outlined by the LEA, was that funding has been provided for 2.5 full-time posts at Lecturer 1 grade in order to staff both the present and projected future special needs courses. This staffing level will also provide for the academic support of students with special needs entering mainstream courses.

2. The project structure

The project was based on an initial investigation of the existing situation (Phase I), followed by an examination of the needs of individual students (Phase II). This report emphasises the case study approach because it was from that in-depth analysis that the college was able to develop strategies. The aim of making real access available to students continued beyond the time-scale afforded by the FEU funding, and has become part of the continuing work of providing for those with special educational needs.

Phases of the project

Phase I examined the existing situation and tried to identify individual students wanting to gain access to the mainstream college provision. The students included those with physical and sensory handicaps, in some cases allied to moderate learning difficulties.

Phase II consisted of a detailed analysis of the needs of students identified during Phase I. They were given opportunities to take part in the life of the college in preparation for entry full-time.

Phase III became the continuing development of Phase II, identifying the changes required in the curriculum in order to accommodate fully students being brought into mainstream college life.

3. Phase I: Understanding the existing situation

In order to understand the existing situation for students with physical and sensory handicaps, it was necessary to examine what was happening to the students at transition. The following information was felt likely to be useful:

— past and present destinations of students at 16+;

— routes of entry of young people with special educational needs into further education;

— numbers of students likely to require further education at Canterbury College;

— the range of disability of students likely to apply;

— identification of specific students wanting mainstream courses in the next academic year.

Past and present destinations of students at 16+

It was very relevant to the project to have an indication of the destinations of students who might have been given access to mainstream college provision. The special careers officer whose area of responsibility coincided with the catchment area of the college carried out a survey of his records covering school-leavers from 1982. Forty-seven school-leavers had been referred to the careers service between September 1982 and April 1986:

Physically handicapped	11
Partially sighted or blind	13
Hearing impaired	23
Total	47

The destinations of these students were:

Student destinations	*Visual impairment*	*Hearing impairment*	*Physical handicap*
16+ special schools in county	1	2	5
16+ special schools out of county	2	-	1

Student destinations	*Visual impairment*	*Hearing impairment*	*Physical handicap*
Secondary schools in county	1	-	-
FE in county	3	-	-
FE (special) out of county	2	6	3
YTS	2	9	1
TOPS (special) out of county	-	1	-
Employment	1	5	-
Social education centres	1	-	-
Hospital	-	-	1

It was clear that very few (only 6%) had gone into mainstream further education.

Routes of entry

On leaving school the majority of students were referred to the special careers officer, working in many instances with county teacher advisers and the careers teacher of the school they were attending. Largely because of the apparent lack of resources in FE within the county, very few of these advisers felt that FE was a viable option for the young people they were dealing with. A number of students had applied directly to colleges and often their needs were not identified until the interview stage, and then course tutors responsible for student admissions were not equipped to deal with the situation and had no point of referral for advice and support. This again highlighted the role of special needs co-ordinators within colleges and the need for staff development.

Extent of the likely demand for FE

Because of the method of holding records of pupils with special educational needs in the county, it was very difficult to obtain accurate figures for likely demand for college places.

Reports from area education officers covering the catchment area of the college identified 17 young people with varying degrees of hearing impairment and 12 with physical handicaps who would be likely to seek further education and training over the next four years.

The teacher adviser for the visually impaired was able to identify 22 visually handicapped young people in a similar position.

Since the majority of these pupils were attending special or designated schools, it seemed likely that there were pupils with special needs in ordinary secondary schools who were not being recorded. Schools within the catchment area of the college, both secondary modern and selective, were approached for such information. Fifty-three schools were sent a questionnaire and 26 replied. Three pupils with visual impairment, 18 with hearing difficulties, and 12 with varying kinds of physical disability were identified. Eleven of the 26 submitted nil returns. Because of the detail supplied by some schools, those making nil returns gave cause for concern. Either students with special educational needs in the three categories surveyed were being diverted from these schools or their needs were not being recognised.

SUMMARY OF RETURNS

	Visual handicap	*Hearing impairment*	*Physical handicap*
Teachers advisers	22	-	-
Area education officers	-	17	12
Secondary schools	3	18	12
	25	35	24

Range and degree of disability of students likely to apply for FE

The majority of students with severe visual impairment within the county were found to be attending an in-county non-maintained school. This school provided 'O' and 'A' level courses as well as pre-vocational training for less academic pupils between 16 and 19 years old. Most partially sighted students could be supported on mainstream college courses. The case study on Peter (Chapter 4) is an example of this. Young people with hearing impairment already supported in partially hearing units attached to secondary schools within the county could, *with continued support*, enter mainstream further education. A number of well-motivated profoundly deaf students might also benefit from mainstream further education courses. This has been borne out by the experience with John, described in the case studies in Chapter 4.

Young people with physical handicap involving mobility problems were largely made up of those with cerebral palsy, spina bifida and motor neurone disease. A considerable number of pupils with asthma and epilepsy were also reported by the secondary schools. The schools were apparently able to manage these pupils with little difficulty. Students who applied for entry into college during the year included three with spina bifida and one with a motor neurone disease.

Checklist for obtaining information for assessing potential student numbers

- Formal requests to county officers responsible for special education needs.
- Liaison with special careers officers.
- Liaison with teacher advisers for special educational needs.
- Liaison with head teachers/special needs co-ordinators in secondary and special schools.

4. Phase II: A needs analysis from case studies

A small sample of students was selected to provide the basis for a needs analysis which would indicate the kind of modifications to the curriculum required to meet individual needs and thus help future planning. Five students were selected - three with physical disabilities and two with sensory disabilities. The students' names have been changed in order to preserve confidentiality. Mary, Joan and Anne had a stated preference for entry into mainstream college courses, seeing it as an important step toward independence. John was entering as a mature student, having an interest in catering but unable to find employment beyond the level of a dishwasher. Peter was attending an out-of-county special school which was not able to offer him his preferred subject area in the sixth form.

Mary

Mary is 16. She was born with spina bifida which has produced a paraplegia. She lives with her parents, eight miles from the college. She attended a local primary school between 1975 and 1981. This was followed by entry to a designated school (a normal secondary school with additional facilities to meet the needs of physically handicapped pupils). She completed her secondary education in June 1986.

Mary's primary school reports refer to her as cheerful and determined, able to command her classmates' willing help. After having worked slowly and been left behind, she gained confidence and became able to work well. Her end of primary school report was a little disappointing. Her teachers thought she was not working to her full potential. She enjoyed horse riding, music, majorettes and swimming as leisure activities. Mary's parents were anxious that her handicap should not unduly limit her activities. Her mother is particularly supportive.

Her end of secondary school profile described Mary as a pleasant and responsible girl suitable for a further education course. Her handicap, rather than deterring her, seems to have encouraged her to succeed. She was seen as reliable and trustworthy and had shown a keen interest and sustained effort in all academic subjects.

Mary integrated fully into secondary school life. She was assessed as being of above average intelligence with average educational attainments. She did all she could for herself, only occasionally needing encouragement or assistance, particularly with practical subjects or PE. Help was also required, on occasions, with toileting and dressing. She was an excellent swimmer and took part in the 1984 Paraplegic Games at Stoke Mandeville, coming away with gold and silver medals.

In her final year, Mary took eight CSE examinations (English, Maths, French, Childcare, Science, Biology, Physics and Sociology) and was expected to average grades 3-4.

Mary's leisure interests remained similar to those shown in her primary school report. She played the accordion and was a member of a local accordion band. She was a member of the local PHAB club. She dropped horse riding in the fourth year because of school options, but received driving lessons at school. If she passed her driving test, her parents intended to buy her a car, thus making transport to and from college easier.

A statement of special educational needs dated 5 June 1985 commented:

> 'Always well supported by her parents who are determined that Mary should have all the support and encouragement required - they are to be commended in their endeavours on her behalf.'

Mary was first interviewed for a college course, following an approach by her headteacher to the special needs co-ordinator, with a view to applying for entry on a Business Studies course. During the interview, also attended by the school's deputy headteacher, Mary's mother and the college co-ordinator, it became apparent that Business Studies was not her first choice. It had been suggested to her because it was the kind of vocational preparation considered appropriate for a paraplegic by both school and parents. The college was able to suggest alternatives to Mary, including one that coincided with her sporting interests. The course was in Leisure and Recreation, and led to a City and Guilds certificate. Mary accepted this suggestion and formally applied for a place on the course.

A further interview took place at the college between Mary and the course tutor, without the Special Needs Co-ordinator present. She was interviewed at this stage like any other student. The response of the course tutor was positive and Mary was offered a place.

At this point, the regional office of the Spastics Society organised a seminar at a sports centre in the county. Its aim was to promote the interest of those in the leisure and recreation industry in leisure centre activities for the disabled. The seminar stimulated much interest and the course tutor responsible for the college Leisure and Recreation course attended. She found the seminar heightened her awareness of the potential for physically handicapped people to be involved in these activities.

A college assessment day provided the opportunity for Mary to join in with

students on the present course so that she and the college could became more familiar with each other.

Mary's needs

Both Mary and her parents, following the advice of careers teachers, considered her future lay in jobs traditionally regarded as suitable for physically disabled women. Mary needed the opportunity to talk through other options with a suitably qualified adviser from FE.

Having identified a course or range of courses which would meet her interests, Mary needed an opportunity to discuss the matter with the specialist course tutor/tutors. She also needed an opportunity to spend time in college to enable her to:

— feel comfortable about the physical and social environment she might be entering;

— gain first-hand knowledge about the course and the level of work involved;

— be able to convince her parents that entry into an ordinary college was the best option for her.

Mary's parents' needs

From the outset, Mary's mother, in particular, had been very involved in helping her make choices. Such help had always been given in a supportive way, as was clear at the first interview. Mary's mother needed to be as much assured about any course of study Mary was to follow as Mary herself, in order:

— to continue to provide support for Mary at times when she might find the course difficult;

— to participate actively in Mary's moves towards greater independence.

Mary's tutor's needs

The course tutor who interviewed Mary for the Leisure and Recreation course had no previous experience of working with a physically handicapped student in a wheelchair. The tutor did, however, have a considerable amount of goodwill towards such a possibility and this formed a good basis on which to present Mary's needs to the tutor.

The tutor needed:

— an understanding of the potential of wheelchair athletes, and Mary in particular;

— an understanding of Mary's physical problems;

— to gain experience of working with wheelchair athletes;

— to be reassured that there would be help and advice for both student and tutor, should it be needed.

Joan

Joan is 16. She was born with spina bifida and is partially confined to a wheelchair. Surgery on her feet is beginning to increase her mobility.

Joan attended a secondary school designated to take some physically handicapped pupils and applied directly to the college for a foundation course in Art and Design. She made no reference to the special careers officer for the district, and arrived at college for an interview without anyone being aware of her disability. The application form had a brief statement from her school saying 'Joan has always worked to the best of her ability and has not allowed her handicap to hinder her work'. The nature of 'her handicap' was unstated. Joan herself referred to spina bifida but the significance of this was missed by the tutor looking at applications.

At her secondary school, Joan had been statemented under the 1981 Education Act; the special educational provision recommended for her was that she should have an electric typewriter to relieve fatigue and the pastoral support of a welfare assistant. It was said that Joan was of average ability and attainments with no obvious learning difficulties and that she would benefit from revision and additional practice in mathematics. She was well able to cope with the wide curriculum of a non-selective school.

At school, Joan was regarded as a pleasant, thoughtful teenager with the determination to succeed which, with a well-balanced personality, would help her in her future life.

Joan had started her school career at the age of 2 when she entered a local special school for the physically handicapped. When she was 8, she was moved to an ordinary junior school. Her skills at reading and writing, by that time, were appropriate for her age but sometimes test results were hindered by slowness. She always needed a lot of practice at maths. At junior school, she was especially interested in cookery, stamp collecting, shell collecting and reading. These hobbies eventually crystallised into an interest in art and design during her secondary school years.

Joan has always enjoyed great support from her mother who attended college on her first interview. Joan's mother is an articulate advocate for her daughter, though Joan is quite capbable of speaking for herself.

Because Joan's physical handicap was not previously identified by the course tutor, her arrival at college presented a dilemma, the solution being to refer her immediately to the special needs co-ordinator, who conducted an initial interview. It was arranged for Joan to see the tutor to the Pre Art School course, which seemed to offer a greater degree of flexibility in the curriculum than an Art and Design foundation course. Joan was seen by the tutor the same day and a four-day 'taster period' joining in with current students was arranged.

Joan's needs

Joan applied to the college with a rather vague idea of following a career which in some way involved art and design. Insufficient information and advice had been available to her. This culminated in the unsatisfactory reception at college when she came for her first interview. She needed to:

— be better informed about the career and course she was interested in;

— have a preliminary interview with a member of the college staff, such as a special needs co-ordinator;

— have an opportunity to look over the college to assure her on such matters as access and support provision.

Joan's parents' needs

Joan lives at home with her mother and has always received a great deal of support from her, although Joan's view is that her mother fusses too much. Her mother needed assurance that:

— the college was able to provide for her daughter's needs in the same way that her school had been;

— the course that her daughter was to follow was appropriate;

— Joan would be able to cope with the college environment;

— funding would be available for transport to and from college and that she would be able to afford to keep her daughter there.

Joan's tutors' needs

Because Joan had arrived in college in an unexpected way, her prospective tutors

were unprepared, though they had responded immediately it became apparent what was required of them. Their needs were:

— an application system giving them early warning of applications from students with special educational needs;

— an understanding of the nature of Joan's disability and the way it might affect her ability to follow the course;

— to know how the curriculum would need to be modified to enable Joan to obtain the optimum benefit from it;

— to be aware of what support services the college might be able to deliver to meet Joan's needs;

— to have sufficient information about Joan's academic and artistic attainments to enable them to judge her overall academic suitability and potential.

Anne

Anne is 16 and was born with spina bifida and hydrocephalus. She was fitted with a Spitz-Holter valve to control her hydrocephalus, which has been successful. For some time she has had kidney problems, these being manifested in the form of a left hydrocephalus. She is confined to a wheelchair.

Anne applied directly to the college, for admission to a Business Studies course, from a residential school for physically handicapped young people which she had attended since the age of 11. Prior to that, she had been well integrated into her local county primary school. At secondary level, she had been studying a variety of CSE subjects and was taking:

	Expected grades
English Language	4/5
English Literature	4/5
Geography	4
Home Economics	3/4
Human Biology and Health	4/5

Anne was regarded as a well-motivated and polite person who was somewhat

cautious towards new situations but well able to follow directions in a reliable way. Her parents had always been supportive, with her mother perhaps being somewhat over protective. In preparation for a more independent life, Anne had attended a social development course at Queen Mary's in Carshalton and a special course for young people with spina bifida at the Lord Mayor Treloar's School. She had developed good skills in personal care and seemed very able to cope with her disability.

Because Anne was unable to make up her mind what specific interest she had, it was suggested that she attend college with her parents to discuss the possibilities available to her. An appointment was arranged with a senior tutor from the Business Studies department. The meeting was also attended by the college special needs co-ordinator and the co-ordinator for CPVE courses. A variety of options were outlined to Anne, including information about some of the changes that were taking place in the Business Studies courses. Plans were being implemented to provide a BTEC course in Business Studies providing basic office skills. The college co-ordinator for CPVE courses said that Anne could be given a place on the college CPVE course, but that it might be more suitable for her to follow the CPVE course being offered at her special school. Anne frequently restated her desire to leave school and gave several reasons for this:

— she would like to live at home and go to college, like other students, on a daily basis;

— she thought college life would teach her to become more independent;

— she said that she resented having to share a room with a much younger pupil;

— she felt that having students with learning difficulties in the same class actually hindered her own progress.

Anne's parents appeared ambivalent about the choices open to her. They supported the view that she should continue at the residential school for a further year, but said they really wanted what she wanted. A day was fixed for her to come into college to spend time with students following a Business Studies foundation course. The day in college would enable everyone, including Anne, to see how well she was able to cope.

Anne's needs

Anne applied to the college directly with little knowledge of what it could provide for her. She expressed a rather vague interest in a course in Business Studies with a view to working eventually in an office. She saw college as holding the key to her independence. She needed:

— to talk to college staff with a view to understanding what options were open to her;

— to have a more realistic view of her academic abilities in view of her expected CSE grades;

— to gain experience of life in college in order to see what would be demanded of her and how different it would be to the protected life of the special school. This was especially necessary as Anne thought college was an easy route to independence.

Anne's parents' needs

Because they had incomplete information, and what to them had been conflicting information from Anne's school, her parents needed:

— to talk directly to college staff;

— to feel comfortable about Anne's transition from special school to FE;

— reassurance about the availability of such things as support services and transport, since Anne lived 18 miles from college.

Anne's tutors' needs

Anne applied to college with very little understanding. Her school advisers had little idea what the college could offer her. In order to advise her and her parents, the tutors needed:

— an adequate educational and medical history;

— an understanding of the problems associated with her condition;

— to know what demands for special resources Anne might make on the college and the department in which she might study;

— to know if these demands could be met.

John

John first approached the college for training in September 1985 but did not get as far as an interview. The course tutor felt that the courses being offered were not suitable for a profoundly deaf student who had little or no speech. At the time of the first application, there was no established policy towards disabled students and no college co-ordinator to advise course tutors and applicants.

John's next application was directed to the college through the chaplain/social worker of a local association for the deaf and a first interview was arranged. This interview was with the college co-ordinator, the chaplain being present to interpret.

John presented himself as a lively young man of 25, a complete extrovert who, in spite of his difficulties, was surviving in the hearing world. He had very little speech but constantly tried to use what he had. He was able to lip-read but, it appeared, with some difficulty.

John had been working as a catering assistant at a local private school for some months and was enthusiastic to train formally as a caterer. It was arranged that he should meet one of the senior course tutors from the catering department; at the same time, his previous educational experience would be followed up to see if this would assist the college to make better provision for him.

John had been deaf from birth and had commenced his formal education at a local non-maintained residential school for deaf children. Although this school had a record of his having attended, detailed records were no longer available. Following his secondary education, he attended two further education colleges for the deaf. Only one of these had a full record of his attendance. A report on his experiences at this college was requested, but was refused on the grounds that the information was 'confidential'.

The principal of the college did, however, agree to talk about John informally. He was remembered as being an intelligent, highly motivated young man who, perhaps, was underachieving. He had often visited the college since leaving and for a while was a 'mentor' to younger students. It was felt that he could cope with mainstream FE with the right level of support. During his time at the two residential colleges he had followed general education courses which had no specific vocational bias.

On completion of the residential courses, John had spent four years working on the production line of a local factory, but had not found this work satisfying. He spent a lot of his free time taking part in the activities of a local association for the deaf which was providing for those with profound hearing loss. He eventually changed his job and began working for a private boarding school as a catering assistant. This was fairly menial work, but gave him an insight into the catering world and he determined to follow it up by gaining professional training. He spent about six months in the job before terminating his employment and attending an assessment centre for the disabled maintained by the Manpower Services Commission (now the Training Agency).

It was at this time that he made his first application to the college and was refused. His second application met with more success because it was directed through the college co-ordinator. He apparently enjoyed the time at the residential assessment centre where his aptitude for a variety of jobs was assessed. A formal report from the centre was repeatedly requested but to no avail.

John's next contact with college was when he attended an interview with a senior course tutor in Catering. The interview was a success, with the tutor becoming quite enthusiastic about the challenge that communicating his subject to John would present. Arrangements were made for John's ability to cope to be assessed in college by a four-day 'taster' session.

John's needs

— John had been turned down on one previous occasion by the college and required reassurance that a further application would be worthwhile. A meeting with a designated person such as a special needs co-ordinator would fulfil this requirement.

— John also needed to talk to a course tutor to gain understanding of what would be required of him on a Catering course, what equipment would be needed, and the cost involved.

— As a mature full-time student, John would have substantial financial needs. He needed information on the kind of grant aid available and the agencies which might provide it.

John's social worker's needs

— John's social worker had no previous experience of assisting a profoundly deaf student to enter an ordinary college of further education, and needed information from a designated person at the college on what support might be available.

— He needed to know what the financial implications would be.

— He needed to be reassured that his client would have a reasonable chance of operating successfully in the college environment.

John's tutors' needs

John's tutors had no previous experience of working with a profoundly deaf student and required a great deal of preparation. They needed to be:

— aware of the level of communication they might have with John;

— aware of John's likely potential to acquire practical and theoretical skills;

— comfortable about the degree of risk of having a non-hearing student in the potentially dangerous environment of an industrial kitchen;

— reassured about the level of support they would receive in reinforcing and expanding their own and John's communication skills.

Peter

Peter was first directed to the college by the special careers officer who had been in contact with the teacher adviser for the visually impaired in the county. He had spent most of his secondary school life in residential schools for the partially sighted. He is an albino with poor eyesight, but manages to cope very well. If the present policies concerning the partially sighted had been in operation at the time Peter entered secondary school, he would probably have continued to be educated in a normal school. His primary and junior education had taken place in local schools, first in Buckinghamshire and later in Kent. He commenced his secondary education in a residential school, out of county, in 1980, and in 1984 transferred to another residential school for the partially sighted. He remained at this school until June 1986.

At secondary school, Peter showed a wide range of interests and, in his final two years, took courses in English, Mathematics, Music, Typewriting, Commerce, Metalwork and Technical Drawing. He gained good average marks in these subjects and it was considered possible that he might go on to do 'A' level subjects. Peter himself was rather unsure about this. His uncertainty seemed to be made worse by the school's apparently ambivalent attitude towards him and his future. In the end, it seemed that he would be offered a general education course which included a considerable amount of work experience.

During his fifth year, Peter had begun to express an interest in entering the construction industry, but his school was unable to offer a specific course. 'A' levels and the BTEC National Course as a safety net were presented to him as the route he should follow. Following discussions with the special careers officer, it was suggested to Peter that he might consider entering further education as an alternative to remaining in the sixth form of his residential secondary school. It was felt that further education would offer him the opportunity to become more independent in the sighted world.

The response from his residential school was immediate and negative. The staff expressed doubts that any shift from his present school could be to Peter's benefit. They doubted if he could adjust emotionally to the college atmosphere and wanted assurances that all the support, expertise and equipment was

available for educating a visually handicapped student. A considerable amount of pressure appeared to be placed on Peter to remain in his school.

Peter, being at an out of county school, found it difficult to visit college for an interview during the college term. His parents were invited to visit the college to talk to the special needs co-ordinator, special careers officer and the teacher adviser for the visually impaired. It was thought necessary that his parents should be comfortable about the idea of him making this large step of moving from a residential school to an ordinary college of further education. At the conclusion of the meeting, it was generally felt that further education was indeed the route that would have the most benefits and a wider choice of options for him, and that he should be actively encouraged to consider it.

The college special needs co-ordinator took up the matter of Peter's interest in the construction industry with the head of the section which organised BTEC courses within the Construction department. Peter's academic record indicated that he would quality for entry to a BTEC National Certificate course designed for the construction industry. A date for an interview was arranged at a time when he would be taking a long weekend from school.

At the interview, Peter appeared a tall, well-built young man with a likeable nature. His rather slow way of speaking belied his abilities. He explained that he was interested in the possibilities of a career in the construction industry and the discussion then revolved around the options available within the college. In talking to him about his partial sightedness, it became apparent that he would have only limited difficulty in coping with the fully sighted world of the college. He had been functioning at his residential school without special arrangements or equipment and could cope well with ordinary printed materials. The reservations expressed by the staff at the residential school about his ability to cope in a fully sighted environment were difficult to understand. Peter was most concerned about his ability to cope with the intellectual demands of a college course. He chose, because of this, to apply for a pre-certificate course which had a large practical component. It was decided that initially no special arrangements would be made for him, but that his progress would be reviewed six weeks into the course in order to identify and attempt to solve any problems he might have.

Peter's needs

Peter, already attending a residential school for the partially sighted with a 16-19 unit attached to it, was under strong pressure from the school which wished to retain students in its extended education unit. It was difficult for Peter to have an objective view of alternatives since the advice from the school was so heavily biased. His interests and those of the school he attended were not necessarily the same. He needed:

— an objective view of alternatives;

— to talk to specialists about available courses he was interested in, in order to understand what would be required of him as a student;

— information on the kind of support services available to him in ordinary FE and help to discern if it would be sufficient to enable him to cope;

— to know not only about the course he would likely be following but, as importantly, the progression for people following such a course.

Peter's parents' needs

Peter's parents had grown used to him attending a special residential school. They had begun to get used to the possibility of him attending an ordinary college prior to talking to the college staff. They were proud of their son's ability to cope in a fully sighted world. They were already persuaded that normal college life would probably be better for him. They needed:

— information on the variety of options that their son might have available;

— to be persuaded that the support offered at college would be adequate to meet their son's needs;

— to be at ease in their dealings with college staff.

Peter's tutors' needs

The staff of the section of the Construction department where Peter might be studying had no previous experience of dealing with partially sighted students. It was fortunate that his visual handicap was borderline since it enabled him to function almost normally. The staff needed:

— reassurance about their ability to cope with Peter's handicap in the classroom;

— awareness of what would be required of them in supporting Peter;

— to feel that there was back-up for them should difficulties arise.

Summary of needs

All the students in this small sample had common and specific needs which affected their ability to join a mainstream college course. Parents and college staff also had their needs which had an important bearing on their particular relationship to the students and on their ability to advise and support them.

Common needs of students

These were identified as the need:

— for adequate careers advice at an earlier enough date to ensure informed transition into further education;

— for students to have the opportunity to visit colleges of further education to talk in both a general and specific way to somebody with knowledge and experience of their special educational needs;

— to know what support services there would be for them as individuals;

— to spend time actually experiencing some of the learning processes they would be part of if they entered a particular college course;

— to know what progression from their particular course somebody with their specific special educational need might realistically expect.

Common needs of parents

The support provided by most parents is considerable. It is of paramount importance that those supporting the student in this way should be as informed and comfortable about the future as the students themselves. Parents should:

— have available, in an intelligible form, as much information about the options open to their children as possible, and this should be free of bias;

— have direct access to the providers and gain confidence in them;

— understand the financial implications of the various options and what assistance may be available;

— have access to an experienced person whenever they may need advice.

Common needs of course tutors

In many cases, tutors may have had limited experience of providing for young people with special educational needs. This is especially true of staff in colleges which are undertaking such work for the first time. In the case studies being reviewed, the common needs of tutors were seen as the need:

— to have available as complete a range of information about the student applying for a course as possible;

— to be informed or have access to understandable information about specific needs and learning difficulties associated with those needs;

— to have access to information about resources to meet specific needs;

— to have a flexible approach to their particular course to enable modifications to the curriculum to take place;

— to have access to the support of a member of staff with specific skills in providing for special educational needs;

— to have the support of senior management in their role as provider for students with special educational needs;

— to have experience of particular students in the classroom in order to assess their ability to cope with a course and plan curriculum modifications to meet particular needs.

Specific needs

Three students with spina bifida

All three were wheelchair users, but two were capable of spending some time out of their chairs with the help of crutches and calipers. Prior to their entry to college, their specific needs were identified as:

— knowing which colleges would be prepared to consider them for entry with their level of need for the particular course of study they wished to undertake;

— being aware of the degree of physical access available to them and the range of support services being offered specific to their needs;

— having realistic attitudes about their own academic and physical abilities.

A profoundly deaf student

John entered as a mature student. John's specific needs were related both to his deafness and to his entry as a mature student. His needs were seen as:

— having access through an interpreter to college staff to make known his requirements;

— being assured of the degree of assistance with communication he was likely to receive;

— knowing what funding would be available to him as a mature student.

A partially sighted student

Peter transferred to college from a special school. His specific needs were seen as:

— being aware of the contrast between an environment specifically designed for the partially sighted and the ordinary college environment;

— being assured that there were those in college who had access to support services for the partially sighted, who would respond sympathetically to his needs as they became apparent.

5. Phase III: The students in college

Phase III did not conclude when the funding for the project ended. It was inevitably a continuing process, and some of the developments described below are still progressing. The case studies provided the main impetus and focus for the changes: the college used an inductive approach to its special needs provision. Instead of establishing sets of principles in anticipation of needs and hoping that these would satisfy the needs, it approached the problem by the identification of needs from an analysis and then established strategies for developments which it was felt would satisfy the needs. The developments are subdivided into a number of headings but many of them are, of course, interrelated.

'Taster experiences'

The following early 'taster experiences' were arranged for the students:

Mary	One day with current Leisure and Recreation course students.
Joan	Four days with current Pre Art School students.
Anne	Two half days - one for interview with course tutors, one taking part in a Business Studies assignment.
John	Four half days - practical sessions with Catering lecturers.
Peter	None arranged - student was not available and the one-year course did not continue in June.

Six weeks after the beginning of the college year, each of these students was asked to review his or her experiences so far, as were their course tutors. It was hoped that this would allow early identification of problem areas and reallocation of resources should there be previously unknown needs. It was important to meet such needs as early as possible so that the student could obtain the maximum benefit.

Mary in college

Mary attended college in July, taking part in the Leisure and Recreation course for a full day of course activities. The morning consisted of canoeing on the local river. Although this was a new activity, she adapted to it well and was quickly able to transfer to it the skills of co-ordination and balance that she had developed in her wheelchair. She received support and encouragement from the other students who helped her with boarding the canoe and launching. Since she is a very good swimmer, she was not at all anxious about capsizing and righting training. During the lunch hour, Mary went to the local park with other students

to eat lunch and this gave the opportunity for her to talk with them about their views of the course they were following and for them to get more personal insights into her thoughts and aspirations.

The afternoon was spent in games and exercises in the sports hall, when Mary was able to have a more prolonged interview with the course tutor. Questions of practical placements were discussed and a number of proposals were made about leisure centres which might be prepared to accept her for practical experience. The question of her transport to college and to her practical placements was discussed. Mary hoped very soon to have passed her driving test and to have an adapted car for her own use. This would help with her transport difficulties. Meanwhile, it was expected that the education authority would supply transport to and from college.

At the end of the day's activities, both Mary and the course tutor had been able to make a much more realistic appraisal of some of the difficulties they would both experience when she started the course in September.

The main problems identified were:

— Mary was only able to change her clothes slowly and, on occasions, needed assistance.

— She was not able to move between practical and theory classes as quickly as an able-bodied student.

— Existing shower facilties were not easily accessible to students in wheelchairs.

— Sports hall access was difficult as was that to the base room occupied by the course.

— Mary was not used to as active a day as was expected of her on the course, and became very tired.

— She found tiredness affected her concentration span significantly.

Mary joined the new intake of students on the Leisure and Recreation course at the end of September. For the most part, the problems identified in the 'taster day' were either solved or sufficiently minimised as to be no longer significant:

Changing clothes
Moving between classes } A short interval was timetabled between classes to allow for this

Shower facilities	Shower provision added to specifications for a new toilet with disabled access
Access to sports hall	Ramped access provided
Access to course base room	Base room moved to ramped mobile classroom
Tiredness and reduced concentration span	Course timetable modified to allow for shorter theory classes

Six weeks into the term, Mary felt she had settled into college. Her practical placements were proceeding smoothly, and she had the additional encouragement of having passed her driving test. Her course tutor was satisfied with the way she had fitted in with the other students, but felt that she needed to push herself rather more on occasions. Entry into further education coincided with her being fitted with new braces which had considerable potential for improving her mobility. Mary's anticipation of the event provided a considerable distraction. It became evident that such interruptions in the course were almost inevitable for a student like Mary and although they are likely to be fewer than in earlier school life, they may be none the less significant. The course tutor has to be flexible enough to accept this.

Mary found, after her first six weeks, that her wheelchair was rather too heavy and did not give her enough mobility for some of the activities in which she was taking part. Although staff had talked earlier about obtaining a suitable sports wheelchair for her, it was anticipated that this could only be done through private funding. It had been hoped to approach local fund raising organisations with this need as a project. This became unnecessary following contacts between the college special needs co-ordinator and the local DHSS appliance centre. A very helpful response to enquiries about providing a sports-type wheelchair for Mary was received and arrangements were undertaken for a fitting of an appropriately sized chair along with stability testing.

Joan in college

Joan joined the Pre Art School course for a four-day 'taster' in May 1986. She was introduced to an existing course with a well-integrated group of students who seemed to accept her presence without any difficulty or embarassment. The four days in college were a great success. At the end of these, both Joan and her tutor were asked to comment on the experience. Joan said:

'I enjoyed my four days at college immensely. I found it was totally

different from school. I was surprised how I managed to cope with the stairs, but there wasn't always someone to help me with my wheelchair, which could be frustrating. It would be easier if there were one or two people who I knew who could go with me.

The second problem I encountered was at lunch times when getting my meals was difficult as I couldn't see what food there was on offer. I have to use my wheelchair as it is the only way I can carry my food.

The toilets were fine for me to use. I like the atmosphere in college and the way people accepted me was great - I couldn't believe it. My sticks were a bit of a nuisance as I had to keep them on my wheelchair, but I started to get used to them at the end of the week.'

Joan's course tutor made her observations on the experience:

'We felt that, on the whole, movement within the art room and other specialist areas were possible with Joan's disability.

Table heights in all the rooms were comfortable although screen printing could be a problem. Access to materials could be a problem but not one that could not be overcome.

Although Joan can climb stairs, we felt the time this takes requires breaks to be longer and help is needed with her chair.

We are worried about Joan's creative ability more than her physical ability. We understand how gaps in her education have come about and do not want her to feel inadequate in the group. The Pre Art School group is high powered and the students will all progress to art colleges. We may not always find time in a large group to give Joan the help she may need. We don't want her to feel left out and yet we don't want her to be competitive. We are not sure how to deal with this problem, if indeed it is a problem.'

These comments showed a great sensitivity on the part of the course tutor to the student's needs and this was crucial to the success of the college course for Joan.

Students in the group were approached to make their comments on the presence of Joan in their group. Two girls befriended her during her four days in college. Both were perfectly at ease with having someone in a wheelchair join their group. Joan's attitude and determination helped the group accept her readily. Apart from the obvious mobility problems, which the group was ready to assist with, the other students saw her as just one of them. They described seeing Joan alone

in the refectory at lunch time, and decided to join her. After initially feeling anxious about her ability to manage alone and how much they should assist, both realised she could cope without help but welcomed their company.

Joan had described to them her frustration when her mother would not let her go out alone. They accepted her wish to be part of the teenage society, limited only by the unavoidable restrictions of her wheelchair.

Joan commenced her course full-time in September 1986. During the first six weeks, she became increasingly confident in coping with stairs and the other physical demands of the college day. She chose mainly to use her wheelchair in the art rooms since it was more comfortable for her. The physical demands of college caused her to lose weight and she found she was able to become more mobile because of this.

Joan found no difficulty in relating to the other students in the group, although at times she expressed frustration with her lack of experience since other students were more able than she was. Sometimes it appeared that a student had acted in a patronising way towards her but she had developed ways of coping with this. Her tutor told of a visit to London galleries when a particular student had announced that she was going to 'look after' Joan. Joan enlisted the help of two young men on the course and gave her 'do gooder' the slip. Joan's presence on the course was proving to be a good learning experience for her fellow students.

After six weeks, Joan talked with the special needs co-ordinator about her experiences so far. She was enjoying the course and finding the day-to-day challenges stimulating. She praised the staff for the support she received from them. She had found resistance to the idea of her working in a welding shop but the lecturer had organised some work that she could do from her chair after being provoked by Joan's determination to do the same work as other students.

Joan's journeys to college each day met with difficulties. The taxi company employed by the LEA sometimes made detours to pick up other students, which resulted in Joan being late for college. This had caused her some distress. Complaints had been made to the company by her parents, which appeared to have resulted in an improved service.

Joan found that attending a full-time course involved her in spending more money than usual. She had not yet applied for Severe Disablement Allowance, to which she might be entitled. It was realised that since she had bypassed the usual referral route via the special careers officer, she was in need of counselling about what benefit applications she could make. Information leaflets and application forms were supplied by the special needs co-ordinator. Such advice should form

an important part of the body of information available to students applying for FE courses.

The normal timetable was largely adhered to when Joan first entered college. However, it was slightly rearranged so that she was required to attend college for only four out of five days, with very little effect on her course content. Since fatigue had been a major factor in slowing down her progress in secondary school, it was felt that Joan might benefit from such a break which would enable her to have time at home for private study.

The facilities of the college library were not yet accessible to students with mobility problems as the library was located on the second and third floors of a building set apart from the main college building. Joan depended on fellow students to fetch books for her. Relocation of the library is an important priority in improving access.

Anne in college

A day attached to an existing BTEC Business Studies course had been arranged for Anne when she attended college for an interview along with her parents. Difficulties were experienced in arranging this since it was timetabled to take place when Anne was involved with her CSE examinations. A date was found when it would be possible for her to attend college, but the difficulties in doing this emphasised the point that the arrangements for 'taster days' should be made as early as possible.

The day in college was a success. Physical access for Anne in her wheelchair proved to hold no problems. All classes were already held in the new Business Studies area of the college which was designed to be accessible to students in wheelchairs. Anne took part in the assignments being followed by the full-time students and, with some help, was able to keep up and make useful contributions. The students were supportive without being patronising. The programme arranged for her was quite demanding and she felt very tired at the end of the day, but enjoyed the experience.

The tutors involved with her felt she could cope, but seemed to have anxieties about Anne being on the course, mainly prefixed with 'What if?'. Anne herself appeared to have few doubts about wanting to enter college. Her parents felt they were better informed than they had been about the courses on offer. They had at one point suggested they had received conflicting information, but it seemed that they had made assumptions based on their own understanding of the confusing range of courses on offer.

It was agreed that Anne and her parents should now reflect on her experiences in

college and then decide if Anne should apply to come into college.

Anne did not pursue entry into college. She elected to remain at her residential school and follow a general CPVE course. On completion of this she would review her options again and perhaps move into FE at this college.

In retrospect, the attitudes of the course tutors Anne met were considerably different from those of the tutors Joan and Mary were involved with. In the case of Joan and Mary, the tutors had discriminated positively in their favour. In Anne's case there was some indication that the interview and the 'taster day' were tinged with negative attitudes, although both parents and tutors asserted they were being positive about the experience.

John in college

John's 'taster' was arranged in conjunction with his social worker, the local specialist social worker for the deaf, and college staff. He was to spend four days working with different tutors, with the assistance of signing interpreters. The staff time involved was covered by money from a staff development budget, since the staff involved might well, in the near future, be teaching John on a longer term basis.

The results of the 'taster' session were most satisfactory. The deputy head of Catering made the following observations:

> 'John was an enthusiastic student during his four sessions at college and was above average in practical skills. We believe that, given the support of a signing interpreter, he could achieve the standards required to be successful in C&G 706/1 examinations. It is felt that specialist catering vocabularly and theoretical catering would require interpretation. Special care will be required to help combat safety hazards in the kitchens.
>
> It is suggested that John should spend two full days a week attached to part-time day courses. On one day he would have the services of a signing interpreter, on the other he would work independently. Although the two days consist of similar work, it is felt one will reinforce the other.'

John's interpreters also made their report:

> 'We feel John thoroughly enjoyed his four days in college. He is enthusiastic and willing to learn. We noted that John arrived late on two occasions. Time-keeping has been a problem before. Our major concern is in the area of language, since John has difficulties in understanding all but the simplest words and sentences. Words like "dough" and "sieve" had to

be explained. John, however, soon understands when an explanation is given. French terms will be very difficult.'

The interpreters felt the need for:

— a book illustrating utensils, with English and French names;

— notes to be rewritten in simple language;

— additional tutorials to explain difficult words, preferably with an interpreter present.

John entered the catering course in September 1986, following a modified curriculum to meet his particular needs. The General Catering course usually consists of a mixed programme of practical and theoretical learning over two years, the important outcomes being the City and Guilds 706/1 and 706/2 certificates. Restaurant Waiting and Management, included in the course, were felt to be inappropriate for him.

It was decided that John should concentrate, in his first year, on obtaining his 706/1 certificate. He was given two full days of the 706/1 programme, the second repeating much of the first day's work. This provided him with 14 hours per week towards this C&G certificate. In addition, he was given a further three hours of cookery to assist him with practical skills. The special components were to be three hours a week of academic support with a specialist communications teacher and a further four hours of supervised library work.

John received grant aid from the LEA - both course fees and a maintenance award. He also received assistance with the purchase of uniforms and equipment. Some additional help appeared to be forthcoming from an independent educational trust. Assistance with finding the grant aid was given by his social worker.

Six weeks into the course, John was making good progress. His practical skills were developing well and his understanding of theory coincided well with that of other students on the course. A test paper based on the style of questions found in the final paper of the 706/1 was given to all students and John scored 56% which was above average for the group at this stage of the course. Some difficulties with time-keeping were experienced, but these were dealt with firmly by the course tutors. John seemed to be making good use of the academic support periods written into his timetable. The tutor was able to provide assistance in some areas where a lack of social competence was evident, and help was given with things such as personal banking and further grant applications.

It had been hoped that John would receive the support of a signing interpreter during the course, but so far it has not been possible to find funding for this. Support was found in an informal way from within the student group he joined. A domestic science teacher was retraining in commercial catering and was willing to work alongside John for one of his days; another student who had a basic competence in signing was enthusiastic to work with John on another day. It is likely that this kind of informal support has contributed significantly to John's progress. Ideally, such support should have been provided formally, as a resource made available by the college. However, the sharing in John's support by fellow students has significantly affected the cohesiveness of the group and enabled John to be remarkably well integrated.

Peter in college

Peter joined his new course in the Construction department at the end of September, following the earlier interviews. He joined the course without any of his contemporaries being aware of his visual problems. Three weeks into the course, his course tutor expressed concern about his ability to follow work from the board. It was suggested that perhaps more could be provided in the form of photocopied hand-outs. Some staff were perhaps a little reluctant to take on what they saw as additional work, but some weeks later there seems to have been an increase in the amount of material provided in this way.

Six weeks into the course, a review of Peter's progress was held by the special needs co-ordinator and the course tutor. A separate interview was conducted with Peter in private. The tutor reported that Peter was able to keep up with course work, had settled well into the course, and related well with the other students. Peter reported he was enjoying being at college and felt that his earlier reservations about being able to handle the theoretical work were unfounded. He felt he was now very interested in the theoretical aspects of building and would like to take a BTEC Certificate/Diploma course. A fellow student was helping him to get down any work written on the blackboard during the course of a lesson. He had attempted to use a monocular to read the board at a distance, but had rejected this as being very slow and only used it occasionally. He felt that he did not require any more support after asking the co-ordinator to talk to one tutor who tended to use a board, in his view, rather to excess. Peter demonstrated his desire for independence by insisting that any special arrangements should be minimised.

Peter's ability to integrate into the course with such relative ease bears out the earlier observations made by the county teacher adviser that Peter was badly placed into a residential school for the partially sighted in the first instance. Dependency had been forced upon him by policies designed with good intent.

The 'taster' days

'Taster' days were conceived as a way of allowing potential students to try out the college. This approach developed out of the link course concept which was already in existence for those with moderate learning difficulties, and has since become established for students with profound hearing loss from a local non-maintained school for the deaf.

The 'taster' day enables students to:

— get a feel for the life of the college;

— gain first-hand experience of a course of study they might be following;

— make comparisons between the more sheltered life at school and the open life at college;

— judge what kind of help they might need to cope with a mainstream college course.

It enables parents to:

— overcome some of their fears about the transition of their child to a more adult life;

— become aware of what the college could offer their child;

— lay the foundation for providing support for their child at transition;

— do this prior to giving total support to their child entering a mainstream college course.

It enables course tutors to:

— get to know individual students;

— assess the problems the course might present to individual students;

— understand specific student needs;

— plan curriculum modifications in the light of those needs;

— make early application for changes in resources brought about by curriculum change;

— take part in appropriate staff development to meet student needs.

Checklist for organising 'taster' days

- Is the concept of 'taster' days accepted across college departments?
- If not, what action might be taken to introduce the idea?
- Is the course curriculum flexible enough to organise 'tasters'?
- Are subject specialists willing to accept some disruption of their teaching programmes to accommodate 'tasters'?
- Does the location of course activities allow for ease of physical access to all students?
- Will the introduction of a 'taster' for a particular student require any additional resources?
- If additional resources are required, how will these be funded?
- What is being done to prepare students on the existing course to receive 'taster' students into their group?

6. Staffing and staff development

Co-ordinators

Early in the project, it was recognised that for the college to make a significant contribution to special needs provision, a co-ordinator had to be appointed. The case studies emphasised the important role of the co-ordinator in respect of:

— co-ordination of applications;

— initial interview;

— counselling;

— course planning;

— continuing links with staff;

— close contact with students;

— liaison with other agencies;

— contacts with parents.

There can sometimes be problems appointing such a co-ordinator in a traditionally organised college where student numbers and the resulting Burnham points are so important. Departmental heads can be concerned by the appointment of a co-ordinator who does not fit neatly into a department structure.

The college was able, during the project, to make a temporary appointment permanent. We would conclude from our experience that a college co-ordinator ought to be:

— responsible to as senior a member of the college as possible, e.g. vice-principal;

— appointed at as senior a grade as possible;

— seen as coming from a particular teaching department.

Existing staff experience

In order to develop the access of students with special educational needs to the

college, it was felt that an analysis of the qualifications and experience of existing staff would be useful. As the curriculum needs of students were identified, the appropriate staff member could be called on to meet those needs. Inability to meet those needs from the experience of staff would be indications for appropriate areas for staff development.

The existence of courses for those with moderate learning difficulties within the college produced a certain degree of expertise in special needs work.

Resources for teaching students with special educational needs amongst existing staff were identified by:

— examination of qualifications and experience of staff already involved in special needs work;

— a questionnaire to all members of staff which would assist in identifying experience and interest.

Following the circulation of the staff questionnaire, it became apparent that this had become more than an information gathering exercise. Full-time and part-time staff were all now fully aware, for the first time, of the overall college policy toward those with special educational needs. This awareness has continued to bear fruit and has been reinforced by some of the awareness-raising events conducted as part of staff development. Staff throughout the college have begun to bring matters which they felt they needed support with to the special needs co-ordinator and other special needs staff.

Since establishing a system of academic support in the Community Care department, in which students could receive additional help from a tutor on a one-to-one basis, requests for such support have begun to come from other departments. The questionnaire did provide an interesting response in that it identified a number of full- and part-time staff who already had some experience in particular aspects of special needs work and who were interested in using their skills within the college. Two examples of this were a lecturer in communications who had spent a year managing a partially hearing unit attached to a secondary school, and a lecturer in the distributive trades who had experience in teaching young people with moderate learning difficulties. Both have been great assets to the special needs work.

Other staffing implications

While it cannot be denied that special training is of great value, the college had to utilise the skills of teaching staff who were not specifically trained; those who participated were keen to be involved and often wanted more involvement. It

was instructive to note that the skills teachers developed for this work, e.g. closer attention to detail, careful preparation of tasks and teaching aids, were of value to their work throughout the college.

However, the college became aware of certain basic requirements:

— staff needed to know about the nature of the special needs;

— they wanted to be part of the dialogue between co-ordinator, student and course team;

— they were concerned about the support they received in cases of difficulty;

— they were keen to find out what facilities existed for the special preparation needed to cope with certain types of special needs;

Staff development

Canterbury College is fortunate because:

— it is near Christ Church College of Higher Education, which has a special educational needs unit;

— there is a joint appointment of a teacher adviser between Christ Church College and the local education authority;

— the LEA believes in curriculum-led, in-house staff development and was willing to make funds available to the college to implement this.

The college arranged a number of staff development programmes using various sources of funding, including TRIST (TVEI-Related In-Service Training). Following some of the issues which became evident in the case studies, it was decided that all new staff, as part of a newly developed induction programme, should receive an input on special needs work in the college.

Much of the staff development was curriculum-led and undertaken in house, but the project identified the need for specialist staff to do more, and the co-ordinator attended a certificate course at Christ Church College which dealt with the education of students with special needs.

A special needs programme cannot work effectively simply on goodwill: it must be supported by a properly co-ordinated policy of staff development. Plans are being prepared to provide at the college a City and Guilds 731 course on Special Needs in Further Education. As access to a wider range of students is made, there

is likely to be a considerable interest in the C&G 731 course.

Staff development for teaching staff - summary

The analysis of the existing level of staff experience and training indicated that, although there was a degree of practical experience, no members of staff had any formal special needs training.

- During the the project the special needs co-ordinator undertook an 11-week full-time certificated course in Special Education Needs at the local college of higher education. It was seen as desirable that other key personnel, such as course tutors, should also undertake such a course at an early date.

- From our experience of John entering college, we wished to make more effective provision for the hearing impaired groups. Specific staff development for this work was considered to be imperative. Links provision for the Royal School for the Deaf provided such an opportunity. The school gave a series of seminars dealing with communication and the hearing impaired which college staff were able to attend.

- A moderate learning difficulties workshop was held to assist the development of an extended education course. It was hoped this would assist students with the transition from school to a college course. The key to the course was to be flexibility, which would allow students freedom to gain experience of college life before entering a mainstream course. At the time of writing this course was in its pilot year.

- A 'technology for special needs' demonstration day, bringing up-to-date equipment into college, was used as an awareness-raising exercise. It drew the attention of those in other college divisions to a range of sophisticated modern equipment and opened up new networks of communication within the college.

- A staff development evening was organised by the vice-principal. The purpose was to consider the implications of a whole college special needs policy in order to raise the awareness of staff generally and to encourage them to think specifically of what role they might have with an increase in numbers of special needs students across the college. Attendance was voluntary and those taking part tended, for the most part, to be already involved.

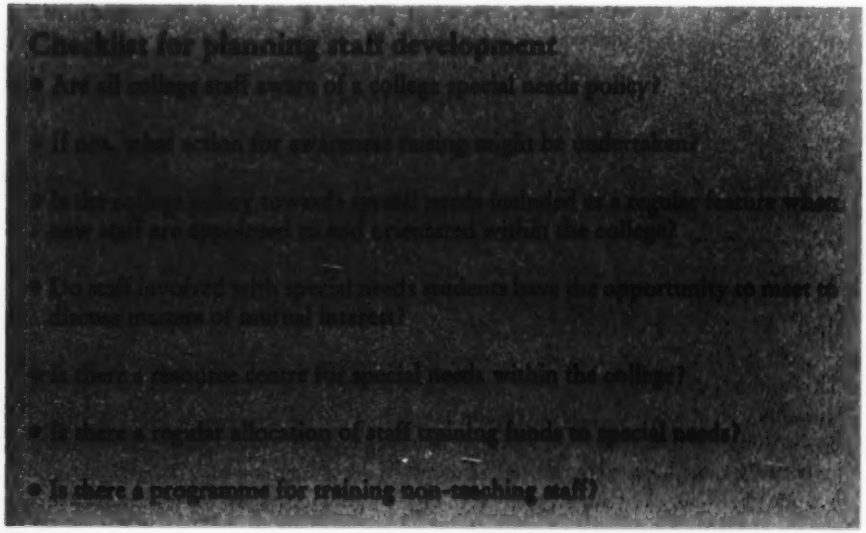
- The college co-ordinator presented the college policy and provision to all new staff members. It was an opportunity to make them aware of the presence of special needs students within the mainstream of the college and the high probability of their becoming involved with them.

Non-teaching staff

The college's earlier experience of physical and sensory handicapped students highlighted the need for a welfare assistant. The case studies emphasised that need and the college was able to make a temporary appointment.

At the same time, the college appointed a member of staff under the Community Programme to assist access to sports and leisure activities. The college became increasingly aware that staff training is an important need for *all* staff. Secretaries, administrative staff, technicians and canteen staff are important resources and allies in the enhancement of provision. New and existing staff were made aware of the special needs provisions and appropriate training time was allowed. The co-ordinator had the opportunity to discuss areas of concern with all non-teaching staff likely to be in contact with special educational needs students.

This identified a problem because, although funding could be obtained for INSET for teachers, there was no easy access to funds for the training of non-teaching staff. This is an issue to which Kent is sympathetic. It has built into its overall staff development plans provision for training for non-teaching staff.


Checklist for planning staff development
• Are all college staff aware of a college special needs policy?
• Is there a resource centre for special needs within the college?
• Is there a regular allocation of staff training funds to special needs?
• Is there a programme for training non-teaching staff?

7. The role of managers

The status of special needs education in any FE establishment will depend to some extent on the attitudes of senior management. It is very important that the principal and/or vice-principal are involved. In colleges which are organised on departmental lines, it needs the support of management with responsibilities across the whole college. In Canterbury College, the vice-principal was particularly concerned to enhance opportunities for those with special needs. The principal was also sympathetic and was willing to give the vice-principal a free hand to further develop this area.

It was quickly recognised that it was necessary to persuade senior staff that little progress would be made unless the college had a named person to co-ordinate activities. The college was fortunate in having somebody who could take on this role. It was not, however, easy to persuade colleagues that one of the promoted posts available ought to be reserved for this role. There was a feeling that special needs was an extra and not part of the curriculum, and plenty of demands were made for the few promoted posts available. It is unfortunate that the Burnham grading of work system views this area with such low esteem. The NBHS report *Burnham - The Biggest Barrier of All?* drew attention to this. In making the case for upgrading a co-ordinator's post, this report was heavily drawn upon. It is important to stress that, in the absence of any additional LEA resources, such moves can only be made at the expense of existing resources, and this emphasises the importance of the role of senior management.

At Canterbury, the promotion to Lecturer II was only temporary (during the secondment of an existing LII). To ensure that it was made permanent, it was necessary to give as much support as possible to the co-ordinator in the work of enhancing special needs. When the post came up for review, such was the quality of work done that the case became virtually incontrovertible. The success was due to the hard work and dedication of the co-ordinator, but owed something to the support of the vice-principal and principal.

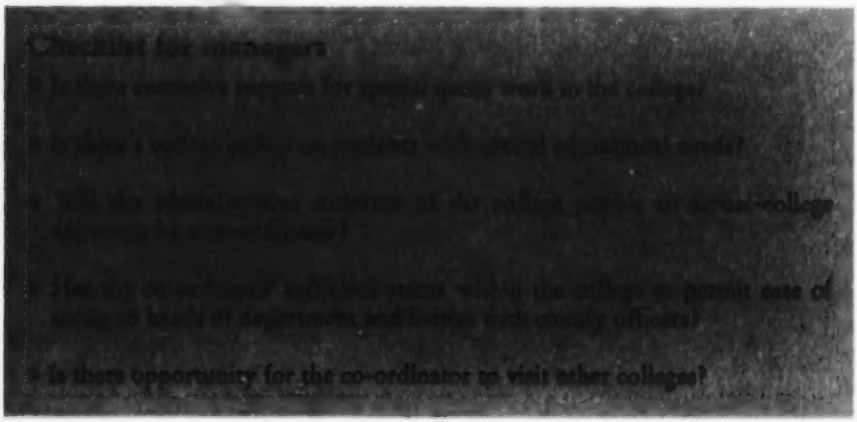
The analysis of needs in relationship to access to mainstream provision showed that there were a number of curriculum issues to be resolved and that someone to co-ordinate activities was essential. Colleges with traditional, hierarchical structures may have experienced some of the problems of across-college co-ordination as heads of department begin to feel threatened by what they see as an erosion of their all-embracing responsibilities. There was a feeling at Canterbury that co-ordinators were in some way special, chosen ambassadors of the vice-principal. It became apparent that some organisational, structural change was necessary and a college division was created, directed by the vice-principal, to which all co-ordinators would be attached. This was particularly important to the development of special needs provision.

A close working relationship is necessary between the special needs co-ordinator and a senior member of staff and problems arise if special needs is seen as the domain of one teaching department. Other heads often see it as something of little interest to them; after all they are 'not getting the points'. Senior staff need to be conversant with curriculum issues if they are to make a meaningful contribution.

At Canterbury, the vice-principal is able to maintain close contact with the LEA, which has been exceptionally supportive in this area of work. Finance has been made available to meet a variety of needs, and the provision of a joint special needs appointment is invaluable. Support has been gained for small capital improvements, staffing, both teaching and non-teaching, and other resources. The role of the vice-principal has also been invaluable in the area of staff development policy.

The role of senior management was critical in piloting through the Academic Board a policy for special needs education (see Appendix 2). The project indicated that it was important to articulate a policy and get as full acceptance of this as possible.

Special needs education requires a good focus and the governing body should receive regular reports of work in this area. The college was fortunate that the chairman of the FE sub-committee for Kent was very interested in this area and a member of the governing body. It is important that college governors are aware of work in this area and that senior management, who are members of the governing body, ensure it is given a high profile.



8. Support services

The experience gained from special needs work already undertaken in the college showed that the course tutor spent a great deal of time on additional academic support and social support. This consisted of dealing with the relationships between students, medical matters arising from such conditions as epilepsy and consultations with parents. Implicit in the intention of Canterbury College to improve access for students with special educational needs, especially those with physical and sensory handicaps, was the need to identify and resource such additional support.

The following were considered to be significant support services which merited attention:

- Special needs advisory groups to provide support and advice were organised in four sections:

  — learning difficulties;
  — physical handicap;
  — hearing impairment;
  — visual impairment.

- Some existing student support services already provided within the college were also able to deliver additional support to students with special educational needs:

  — accommodation and welfare officer;
  — student counsellor;
  — tutor group tutors.

- Support was available from voluntary organisations. Two significant organisations were:

  — a local trust for the disabled;
  — a church association for the deaf.

9. Co-operation with schools and outside agencies

Local schools

Early in the project, it was recognised that the college needed to establish a good rapport with schools which had a responsibility for this area of education. Some of these schools do not always seem able to give an objective view of the range of provision available and, in some cases, an over-protective attitude to young students was noted. It is easy to understand this attitude and colleges must establish quite clearly that they are working together with other providers to ensure that the best opportunities are available. Canterbury College overcame these problems to some extent in two ways:

- Development of link course provision which had a number of important effects:

  — provided 'taster' courses for young people;

  — assisted college staff to become more acquainted with the various requirements of those with special needs;

  — enabled closer links to be formed between the college and schools;

  — allowed a series of meetings to be held, drawn together by the co-ordinator, when fuller discussions could take place regarding the viability of mainstream provision.

- As a result of the linked provision and with the help of the LEA, which made additional resources available to support this work, several liaison groups were formed which drew together college staff, parents, staff from schools and other agencies.

Liaison with outside and other agencies

The careers service

Kent has three careers officers who work specifically for young people with special educational needs. These officers are responsible for providing vocational guidance and careers information for students attending residential schools and colleges in and out of the county. They also act as advisers to students attending day special schools, special units, mainstream secondary schools and colleges.

The three officers are also involved with the Mandatory Reassessments for residential pupils under Section 9 of the Education (Special Educational Needs)

Regulations 1983. This provides an opportunity to consider potential applicants for courses at the college earlier during a student's education than previously.

It is important that close links be maintained with the Careers Service; we were fortunate that our link officer was willing to help set up the project steering committee and to be a member of the various liaison groups.

Social services

The social services are, potentially, a source of many forms of support. Close working relationships with social services were essential to ensure that opportunities for additional resources and help could be exploited to the full. The project coincided with the establishment of a new community care advisory board and the college was able to invite representatives from social services on to the committee. Special needs became a very important area of concern for this new committee and the head of department who serviced this committee was able to draw heavily upon advice given.

Health authority

Representatives from the local district health authority are also involved in the community care advisory board. A physiotherapist has been appointed to the special needs consultative group for the physically handicapped. This work is funded by the health district.

Local authority

The importance of LEA support is covered in Chapter 11. Here we would stress the importance of having a close link with the LEA's awards section. The co-ordinator has been able to do this and the problems of LEA grants for individual students has been well advanced.

Strode Park Trust

The college has established, through the project, a very important working relationship with the Strode Park Trust, a residential establishment for the physically handicapped. Liaison with the then MSC resulted in the development, with the Trust, of plans for a new YTS programme. Important work has been achieved with the Royal School for the Deaf at Margate.

PEGS

The college has drawn upon the work of a Personal Educational Guidance Service (PEGS), an advisory service for adults. A number of students with physical and sensory handicaps have been referred to the college from this local professional service.

10. Parents and college

A College Guide: Meeting Special Educational Needs refers to parents as 'often forgotten by the professionals'. From the beginning, the college determined to involve parents as much as possible. The case studies clearly indicate the need to continue parent involvement and support during further education. For three out of the five students in this study, early discussions with the parents were crucial to the decision to enter a mainstream college course. It is as important to allow parents the opportunity to work out their anxieties about their child's future as it is for the student. The education system is, for many parents, very confusing, and, in many cases, professionals have not been particularly adept at helping parents to find their way. In the cases studies, Anne's parents were very confused and it took a considerable time to help them overcome their confusion. There remained, however, because of this, a deep-seated uneasiness about their daughter's transition from a special school; this was probably the reason for Anne's delayed entry into college.

Experience with the parents of students with special educational needs has emphasised the need for the easy availability of clear, unambiguous and unbiased information which will allow them to continue to support and advise their children during transition. It is important that parents have access to somebody with a range of knowledge and practical expertise who is able to answer their questions and allay their anxieties.

Some parents have been under great pressure to keep their children in the sixth forms of special schools in spite of the evident benefits which could be provided by further education. Discussion about their child's future away from such pressures is important in arriving at a range of real options for the student that the parents will support.

In some cases, this support may be provided by a specialist careers officer and very often he or she provides the first opportunity for parents to have an unbiased discussion about their child's future. A college co-ordinator can provide support to parents, reinforcing the work done by the specialist careers officer. It is essential that the co-ordinator is able to unravel the real needs of parents who may find it difficult to articulate what they are feeling and what they need to know about their child's future.

Canterbury College is, at the time of writing, considering the development of a course for parents of students, or prospective students, with special educational needs. This would be along the lines of those recommended in the *College Guide* and would contain such topics as a guide to the education system, legal and welfare rights, adolescents at transition, movement toward independence and

self-advocacy, and how to deal with the system. It is hoped that appropriate funding could be obtained to make such a provision at little or no charge to the parents.

Parents are often the people most well informed about their children and their continual involvement in their support through college is essential. College staff must be prepared to take opportunities to contact parents and be available to them. At the same time it should be recognised that, in common with all young people, students with special needs have a growing independence and are constantly looking for new ways of expressing this. Some students actually have a measure of resentment towards parents becoming involved in matters relating to college life. In encouraging parental involvement, this aspect should not be ignored. Joan, in particular, has tended to keep her mother distanced from her college life and her mother has respected this with very inconspicuous enquiries about her progress. Mary's mother, on the other hand, has received help and support from college staff.

A checklist for parental involvement

- Are parents offered opportunities for informal visits to the college?
- Is there a suitably qualified member of staff easily accessible to parents?
- Are parents actively encouraged to bring their concerns to college staff?
- Do college staff initiate contact with parents once a student is on a course?

11. The role of the LEA

As the project proceeded, it became clear how important it was to have the support of the LEA. The college was fortunate to be able to rely upon the support of the Chairman of the Further Education Sub-Committee. This support was reinforced by the inspectorate and officers of the LEA. During the project, additional resources were made available to support the work.

The college attempted to ensure that this work was always well focused; visits to the college by councillors, governors and HMI always featured special needs provision. This helped to ensure that the LEA continued to regard Canterbury College as an important centre for this work. The LEA is keen to support special needs provision in all colleges and the inspector has established a special needs co-ordinators' group to work on staff development, INSET planning, inter-institutional liaisons and course evaluation. The college will be represented and feels that the work it has done as part of this project will assist this process. Developments in one college can well become models for developments elsewhere.

12. Conclusion

The work undertaken at Canterbury College to integrate students with physical and sensory handicaps into mainstream courses proved to be a very worthwhile and beneficial experience for all concerned.

The benefits to the students will only become fully evident over a longer period, but early impressions have been good. Some students have, of course, had difficulties in adjusting to college life. These difficulties do not, however, seem to have been any greater than those of many young people moving from school life to the adult world, although in some cases they have been different. It might be argued that this small group of apparently well-motivated young people was not representive of young disabled as a whole. That it has worked for most of the group is clearly an indication of the worthwhile nature of the policy to open up ordinary mainstream education to them. There will probably always be a need for the more protected environment of a residential special school or college for some young people requiring a greater degree of close support. At an interview attended by one of the authors, a young woman from a special residential college was applying to an ordinary college. She said very simply, 'I feel I would like to come to your college because I have grown out of the other one'. She saw the ordinary college as able to meet her needs in ways that the residential college with a high level of support and expertise was not doing. Meeting the needs of the whole person in an environment that will enable them to make the transition into adulthood is an important role of ordinary further education. If it is to fulfil this role, further education must be prepared to take on board many of the changes that were found to be necessary during this project.

The students with special needs not only benefited from their experience but also made an important contribution to their fellow students. They in turn have developed a greater awareness of the needs and rights of those who have special needs. Very quickly, many of them, faced with disability for the first time, have changed from being confused or patronising to having a real concern for, and willingness to listen to, people with disabilities.

The impact of the students with special needs on the staff across the college has been significant, and for many a decided change of attitudes has resulted. The special needs co-ordinator has been approached formally and informally by members of staff asking what they might contribute to special needs work in the college. Course tutors have responded positively to applications from students with special needs and have begun to look for advice on what support could be provided for them. There has been a willingness to consider the ways in which a curriculum could be modified to meet specific needs, so that some course tutors have had to look more closely at course content, considering whether the criteria for acceptance on to courses should always remain the same.

The support for the special needs policy within the college came from the highest level, and the college is, at present, the only one in the county with an appointed co-ordinator and a written policy supported unanimously by its Academic Board. Support from the principal and vice-principal has been crucial to the development of the special needs work. The immediate access of the co-ordinator to the vice-principal has enabled important decisions to be taken without delay. The co-operation between the vice-principal and the college co-ordinator has been enhanced by the specific work of the project.

The interest generated by the project amongst the officers of the LEA came at a time when special educational needs were being given greater emphasis. This provided an important impetus to the work in the college. Giving such significance to the impetus provided by the project must be balanced against the existence of the commitment to special needs already there, without which the project would not have had a place.

The concluding figures may serve to illustrate how, with the commitment, a relatively modest provision can expand rapidly.

1985/86	Full-time	10
	Links	30
	Total	40
1986/87	Full-time	27
	Links	53
	CPVE Links	10
	Others	9
	Total	99

Number of students with special educational needs in college

Bibliography

The following publications were found to be of value during the project and may be useful to those involved in similar work.

Disability Alliance *Disability Rights Handbook* The Disability Alliance, 1986/87

Fish, J. *Special Education: The Way Ahead* Open University Press, 1985

Fraser, B. *Society, Schools and Handicap* National Council for Special Education, 1984

Further Education Unit *A College Guide: Meeting Special Educational Needs* Longman for FEU, 1986

Further Education Unit *Skills for Living* FEU, December 1982

Further Education Unit *Students with Special Needs in FE* FEU, 1981

Mittler, P. and Mittler, H. *Partnership with Parents* National Council for Special Education, 1982

National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education *Handicap, Disability and Special Learning Needs: A Guide to Good Practice in FHE* NATFHE

National Bureau for Handicapped Students and Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust *After 16 - What Next?* NBHS

National Bureau for Handicapped Students, *Burnham: The Biggest Barrier of All?* NBHS, March 1986

Open University *Occupational Information: A Supplement for Students with Disabilities* Open University Press, July 1984

Pankhurst, J. and McAllister, A.G. *An Approach to the Further Education of the Physically Handicapped* National Foundation for Education Research in England and Wales, 1980

Thomas, A. *Health and Social Needs of Physically Handicapped Young Adults* Department of Child Health, Westminster Children's Hospital, December 1985

Appendix 1: Summary of the special needs work undertaken at Canterbury College of Technology

Work Introduction Course (YTS): 15 students

A two-year course for young people with moderate learning difficulties. Students spend two days per week in college and three days per week in work experience placements. Students are referred from secondary and special schools and through the special officers of the Careers Service. Progression to open or sheltered employment and to other college courses.

Extended Education Course: 12 students

A one-year course in its pilot year funded specifically by the KEC. Designed for young people with learning difficulties for whom the Work Introduction Course is inappropriate or who may wish to proceed in other directions. Crucial to the course is the concept of flexibility whereby students may be directed to areas of individual interest. Progression is to the Work Introduction Course, open or sheltered employment or other college courses.

School Links

Courses provided for young people still at school to enable them to have an experience of college life and to provide encouragement to consider following a college course at transition.

Special Needs Links

Discrete Group	15 students from Greystones and Orchard School experiencing an across-college series of 'tasters': 3 hours per week.
Integrated Group	15 students placed with other links students from secondary schools. Students enjoy across-college experiences: 3 hours per week.

Royal School for Deaf Children Links: 23 students

Four small groups, each supported by a RSDC teacher working alongside college lecturers. Students enjoy across-college provision in the areas of Motor Vehicle Maintenance, Painting and Decorating, Horticulture, Community Care, Cooking and Electrical Maintenance. Total of 14 hours per week.

CPVE (Special Needs)

A discrete group of 12 students from Greystones School spending some of their school-based CPVE course in college and enjoying the experience of across-college provision. 3 hours per week.

Students with Physical and Sensory Handicaps following Mainstream Courses

Six students with severe physical or sensory handicaps are integrated into the college on mainstream courses supported by special needs co-ordination.

Strode Park Trust/Canterbury College of Technology Project (YTS)

This is a project to provide 18-20 places for physically handicapped young people to train in the use of microtechnology. Includes some residential provision.

Retraining Programmes

The college, through its Department of Engineering, negotiated with the then Manpower Services Commission to undertake retraining programmes for adults with disabilities, organised on an individual basis. Teaching is conducted on a one-to-one basis.

Appendix 2: Canterbury College of Technology: Policy Statement on Special Educational Needs Provision

1. General

Education should be a right for all who can benefit from it and the college has a duty to ensure that, as far as possible, persons with disabilities and special needs are not prevented from enjoying that right.

2. Admissions

2.1 College application forms should be amended to allow students to provide information about their special needs so that, where possible, the necessary facilities can be made available.

2.2 Applications from students with special needs should be judged initially on the basis of academic criteria alone. No application from students with special needs, who seem otherwise suited, should be rejected before they have been interviewed and given a chance to explain how, with help, they would overcome their difficulties. There should be specific discussion in each such case with the members of staff who would be involved.

2.3 There should be a degree of positive discrimination and flexibility in the application of normal admission criteria to students with special needs.

3. Access

3.1 As far as practicable, buildings should be made to conform to the provisions of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Person Act, viz.

> S4(i)'Any person undertaking the provision of a building to which the public are to be admitted shall, in the means of access both to and within the building, and in the parting facilities and sanitary conveniences to be available (if any) make provision, in so far as it is in the circumstances both practicable and reasonable, for the needs of persons using the building, who are disabled'

even though, under S8(2b), existing educational buildings are specifically excluded from the provisions of the Act.

3.2 Special care should be taken to provide access and facilities in libraries, laboratories, refectories, and other essential areas.

4. Curriculum teaching

4.1 The aims and objectives of existing courses should be reassessed to examine how far they meet the needs of all students (including those with special needs). YTS courses will have to accommodate a growing number of students with special educational needs who, because of their disabilities, have a higher than average chance of being unemployed.

4.2 Where a course of study involves a placement period in industry, commerce or the public services, care should be taken to ensure that suitable placements are available.

4.3 Staff should receive training in the identification and assistance of students with special educational needs. To this end, the college should be affiliated to the National Bureau for Handicapped Students and take advantage of their information and advice service.

4.4 One member of staff should be designated to be responsible for the welfare of students with special needs, for co-ordinating services and facilities and for briefing staff on their needs.

4.5 Consideration should also be given to the provision of off-site tuition which caters for the special needs of disabled people in hospitals, hostels or other institutions.

5. Assessment

5.1 College arrangements for the examination or assessment of disabled students should be reviewed to ensure that they are flexible enough to deal with problems raised by particular disabilities. This may require the provision of amanuenses, appropriate equipment or extended time allowances. The purpose of any special arrangement should be to compensate for the restrictions imposed by disability without impairing the validity of the examination.

6. Careers guidance

6.1 An effective careers advice service should be available to students with special needs both before, during and at the end of the course so that they can discuss any difficulties they are likely to encounter in their subsequent employment.

FURTHER EDUCATION UNIT

Board of Management

Chairman
Allan Ainsworth, Personnel Manager, John Player Group

Members
J Baker, Confederation of British Industry
B Barber, Trades Union Congress
J A Barnes, Business and Technician Education Council
City and Guilds of London Institute
Royal Society of Arts
R J Hartles CBE, Association of Metropolitan Authorities
G Kendall, The Training Agency
D G Libby, Department of Education and Science
J O Morris CBE, Association of County Councils
L J Rees, Welsh Joint Education Committee
G M Rowarth, Association of Principals of Colleges
Association of Colleges for Further and Higher Education
B D Short, Her Majesty's Inspectorate
A F Warren, National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education

Observers
Dr F D Duffin, Department of Education, Northern Ireland
J Howgego, Scottish Education Department
R L James HMI, Welsh Office Education Department
P Watkins, National Curriculum Council

Secretary
Geoff Stanton, Chief Officer, Further Education Unit

Objectives

The objects for which **The Further Education Unit (FEU)** *is established are to promote, encourage and develop the efficient provision of further education in the United Kingdom and for that purpose:*
a) to review and evaluate the range of existing further education curricula and programmes and to identify overlap, duplication, deficiencies and inconsistencies therein;
b) to determine priorities for action to improve the provision of further education and to make recommendations as to how such improvement can be effected;
c) to carry out studies in further education and to support investigations of and experimentation in, and the development of, further education curricula and to contribute to and assist in the evaluation of initiatives in further education;
d) to disseminate and publish information, and to assist in the dissemination and publication of information, about recommendations for and experiments and developments in further education.

Address

2 Orange Street, London WC2H 7WE Telephone: 01-321 0433

67